

Message Text

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13
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3642
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

S E C R E T BAGHDAD 1380

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR IZ
SUBJECT: IRAQI FRUSTRATIONS OVER AREA DEVELOPMENTS

1. IRAQI FRUSTRATIONS OVER COURSE OF EVENTS IN AREA
CONTINUED UNABATED THIS WEEK. IRAQ'S LEFTIST
IDEOLOGICAL ALLIES ARE UNDER SHARP ATTACK IN KUWAIT
AS WELL AS IN LEBANON. THE HATED SYRIAN REGIME SEEMS
ANNOYINGLY STABLE DESPITE IRAQI BLUSTERING ON ITS
BORDER. IRAQI PRESS HAS REACTED WITH INCREASINGLY
VITRIOLIC ATTACK ON SYRIA AND ON THE AREA'S
"REACTIONARY IMPERIALIST REGIMES".

2. THE KUWAITI REGIME'S ATTEMPTS TO REDUCE PALESTINIAN
AND LEFTIST INFLUENCE IN KUWAIT WERE LOOKED UPON AS
UNFRIENDLY ACTS BY THE IRAQI REGIME. IRAQIS FIND IT

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DIFFICULT TO HIDE THEIR CONTEMPT FOR KUWAITIS

UNDER BEST OF CIRCUMSTANCES AND THUS FOUND IT EASY TO INTERPRET RECENT EVENTS IN KUWAIT AS DELIBERATE PROVOCATION TOWARDS IRAQ. IRAQI TROOP MOVEMENTS AND BORDER INCURSIONS WERE NO DOUBT DESIGNED TO REMIND KUWAITIS THAT IT WOULD BE PRUDENT FOR THEM IN FUTURE TO SHOW MORE UNDERSTANDING OF IRAQI SENSITIVITIES. WE DOUBT THAT IRAQI REGIME HAS MORE SERIOUS OBJECTIVE IN MIND AT PRESENT, ALTHOUGH NOT IRAQIS ARE CONVINCED THAT SOME DAY IRAQ WILL SOMEHOW REGAIN ITS RIGHFUL POSSESSIONS IN KUWAIT.

3. SADDAM HUSSEIN MUST ALSO BE IRRITATED BY ASSAD'S MOBILITY AS CONTRASTED WITH HIS OWN UNWILLINGNESS TO LEAVE IRAQ. ASSAD WAS ABLE TO VISIT PARIS AND COLOMBO IN RECENT MONTHS DESPITE SYRIA'S BURDENSOME INVOLVEMENT IN LEBANON. HUSSEIN, BY CONTRAST, CANCELLED VISITS TO COLOMBO AND TO THE ARABIAN PENINSULA ON EVE OF DEPARTURES, THUS GIVING IMPRESSION THAT HE WAS EITHER IN DIFFICULTY AT HOME OR WAS UNSURE OF HIS DIPLOMACY ABROAD. IN EITHER CASE, HUSSEIN'S IMAGE SUFFERED IN CONTRAST TO ASSAD'S WHO SEEMS, SO FAR AT LEAST, TO HAVE SUCCESSFULLY SURVIVED HIS HIGH-RISK POLICY IN LEBANON, MUCH TO THE CHAGRIN OF THE IRAQIS WHO WERE HOPING TO USE HIS LEBANESE INVOLVEMENT AS A RATIONAL FOR HIS OVERTHROW.

4. THESE CONTINUED FRUSTRATIONS MAY HAVE EFFECT OF SLOWING DOWN OR REVERSING IRAQ'S POLICY OF REDUCING ITS INTERNATIONAL ISOLATIONS. RHETORIC NOW APPEARING IN PRESS IS REMINISCENT OF BAD OLD DAYS IN LATE SIXTIES AND EARLY SEVENTIES WHEN IRAQ WAS ON BAD TERMS WITH MOST OF ITS NEIGHBORS. IT SEEMS LIKELY, HOWEVER, THAT REGIME HAS LEARNED FROM ITS EARLY EXPERIENCES AND WILL NOT LET ITSELF BECOME AS ISOLATED AND DEPENDENT ON THE U.S.S.R. AS IT WAS IN ITS MORE YOUTHFUL AND IDEOLOGICALLY RIGID DAYS. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STILL SEEMS TO BE THE REGIME'S NUMBER ONE PRIORITY, AND WE DO NOT EXPECT THE CURRENT FRUSTRATIONS TO CHANGE IRAQ'S BASIC POLICIES OR

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AFFECT ITS DESIRE TO DO BUSINESS WITH THE WEST. AN INCREASE IN COVERT ACTIVITY, HOWEVER, PARTICULARLY IN SYRIA, KUWAIT, AND THE LOWER GULF, IS A MORE LIKELY IRAQI RESPONSE. WILEY

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